

## **GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING COMMUNITY ELECTION**

Community organizations often ask local Leagues to administer elections for their Boards of Directors or for issues that need member decision. Examples of organizations which might request this service are local citizen groups, housing authorities, health groups and condo associations.

This is an area where Leagues can volunteer their services, but where they can, most appropriately, charge a fee. Usually the organization has a budget which funds their election process. Their need is finding competent administrators.

For Leagues new to this area of service and/or fund raising the following guidelines may be useful.

1. Meet with the organization representatives to learn the type of election to be administered and what the League's responsibilities will be. Questions you will want to ask are: Will the voting be by paper ballot or machine? If paper, who prints them? If machine, who will set it up? In either case, who makes the arrangements? How many polling places will be necessary? For what hours? How will you determine who is eligible to vote? Will there be a procedure for challenging ballots, and deferring a final vote count until challenged ballots have been verified or disqualified?
2. Review a copy of the organization's bylaws to determine the rules that govern its election process.
3. Working from the bylaws, determine the date that the election is to be held. Set up a timetable by counting back the required number of days for each phase that must be scheduled. Include the nominating process, even though this is not a League responsibility, because a delay in that phase may disrupt the rest of the schedule.
4. Put in writing your understanding of exactly what the League is responsible for and what the organization will provide. Include in this document a statement that all literature and ballots state that the League is a nonpartisan organization supervising balloting procedures only and takes no position on issues or candidates before the voters in the particular election and that any literature or ballot that uses the League's name must be subject to prior approval by the League. Get this statement approved and signed by the organization.
5. The League is the custodian of the ballots until such time as the results have been certified by the League or until the League withdraws from its supervising role. Establish ahead of time who the ballots should be returned to in the latter event. When paper ballots are used, have a League member check the copy before it goes to the printer. It is disconcerting to find when the polls are ready to open that the ballots are wrong. Avoid the opportunity for fraud by having a League member pick up the ballots from the printer. If ballots are not numbered, number each one as it is given to the voter.
6. After the ballots are counted, give the unofficial results to the representative of the organization who is present. Submit your formal statement of the vote in typed form and signed. (Certified by Jane Doe, League of Women Voters of Fair City"--either the election administrator or the president.)
7. In setting a fee, charge enough to pay poll workers if you must. It is possible that you won't have enough League volunteers to staff the polls. You may also have costs for copying instructions and for training sessions. The time of the person who will organize the election, settle the contract details, go to planning sessions and write the final report should be compensated for.
8. As soon as possible after the election, meet with the League members who worked on the election for review and evaluation. Write a detailed report for another year or another election.